



Indiana Department of Education Office of Accreditation
FAQ: School Improvement Plan Submissions
2010-2011 Academic Year
www.doe.in.gov/accreditation

Since moving to yearly accreditation last year, schools in Indiana are no longer on either a five-year or three-year rotation for accreditation. We have received several questions about the process for developing and updating a building's school improvement plan (SIP) and want to make sure that you have the best information going forward.

(1) I always submitted revisions to my school improvement plan by submitting the on-line DOE-RR (Revise and Review). What has changed?

The DOE-RR has been eliminated, and schools will make yearly revisions to their SIP in the document itself.

(2) I thought a SIP was good for three years. Why is my school being asked to do a new SIP each year?

The three year scope of the SIP has not changed. Yearly revisions and updates to the plan are required by statute and previously were made through the DOE-RR each year. These revisions, reflecting changes in the school's data or personnel, now are made in the SIP document itself. The SIP is a living document and should always reflect the objectives of the school for the next three years.

(3) Have the timelines changed for the SIP?

The only thing that has changed is the final due date. Existing schools must submit by September 15; new or reconfigured schools submit by November 1. In the past, the DOE-RR was due on June 30th and that submission also required a copy of the plan be attached. With the change to spring testing, schools now will receive their testing data during the summer, and the later submission time allows for buildings to review the data and make whatever adjustments to their plan they feel is necessary.

(4) Must I wait until the fall to work on the SIP plan?

No. The later submission date simply allows for those last minute adjustments. Schools typically reviewed their plan in the spring in preparation for the DOE-RR deadline of June 30, and there is no reason for schools to change that schedule.

(5) Are there a required minimum number of times a school improvement committee must meet? No.

(6) Who must serve on the SIP committee?

The initial plan and annual review must be made with input from a committee of persons interested in the school—including administrators, teachers, parents, and community and business leaders—appointed by the principal. Teacher appointments



to the committee must be made in accordance with IC 20-29. IC 20-29-6-7 sets forth the mandatory subjects a school employer must discuss with an exclusive representative. Any committee that makes a recommendation on a mandatory subject of discussion is one that requires the exclusive representative be given the right to appoint all teacher members of the committee. The development of school improvement plan clearly meets that test.

(7) If I feel the plan's revisions are complete at the end of the school year, must I wait until September to submit the plan?

No. The plan can be submitted at the end of school. If there is a need for adjustments, the plan can be re-submitted later in the fall.

(8) What is the process for uploading the SIP?

In May, the new on-line accreditation legal standards assurance forms will be posted and available for use. The new legal standard #1 is the submission of the SIP. As is found in other on-line forms allowing a document to be submitted, there will be a button that will open a window for you to browse your documents and select the SIP file to be submitted.

(9) What document file format is acceptable for uploading?

The on-line system is setup to accept documents in the Microsoft Office .doc format as well as the common Adobe .PDF format.

(10) In the past, I submitted separate sections of the SIP as individual documents. Can I still do that?

No. You will need to merge the documents into a single file and then submit that file.

(11) The DOE-RR contained a building's application for a Professional Development Grant funds. Where do I apply for this grant?

Unfortunately, the Professional Development Grant funds were a victim of the state funding reductions. Funds that were planned for distribution this spring were frozen, and there is no indication that funding will be restored for the 2010-2011 school year. In the event that these funds become available for next year, a new, separate on-line application will be made available for your use.

(12) If there is no funding available for the Professional Development Grant, does the school still need to include a professional development plan within the SIP?

Yes; however, a professional development budget is not required.

(13) Without a Professional Development Grant, is the signature of the teacher's association exclusive representative still required to confirm agreement with the professional development component of the SIP?

Yes. Because everything will be assured on-line for the legal standards, the assurance screen for compliance with requirements for the SIP will also include a checkbox to confirm that the school or district has the signature of the teacher association



exclusive representative on file.

The signature of the exclusive representative can be kept on file with the other SIP related documents at the building. If the exclusive representative normally signs once for all schools in the district, that assurance form can be kept at the district level and the checkbox would be checked by each building principal.

There are two forms, both located at www.doe.in.gov/accreditation. One form is used when the exclusive representative approves the professional development portion of the SIP for all schools in the district with one signature. The second form is used when the exclusive representative signs off on each school separately.

(14) My building is classified as an “accredited program.” Are we required to produce a school improvement plan?

A SIP is not required for an accredited program.

(15) Our building’s SIP needs to include a non-standard course. What is required?

In the spring prior to submission, the building needs to complete and submit an Approval Request for Non-Standard Course and Curriculum Program form prior to the submission of the SIP. After the application has been submitted, the non-standard course/curriculum should be noted in the plan. The instructions and forms are available at www.doe.in.gov/accreditation.

(16) If a school has an attendance rate that is already over 97%, is attendance still a mandatory component?

High performing schools will still need to include a reference to attendance, if only to address strategies to keep the attendance rate at a high level.

(17) Q: Our school developed a Title I Schoolwide or NCLB Improvement plan. Is this a PL 221 plan?

A: No. While schools do not have to incorporate a merged plan, many schools do develop a single plan that is inclusive of PL 221 requirements, NCLB improvement requirements, and Title I schoolwide plan requirements, if applicable.

A [Title I checklist](#) is located on the [DOE Title I site](#).

A chart comparing PL 221 requirements to Title I schoolwide requirements to NCLB plan requirements is found on the [Accreditation web page](#).

(18) What are the required components to be included in the plan?

- a. [IC 20-31-5](#) requires:
- b. A plan shall lay out objectives for a three (3) year period and must be annually reviewed and revised to accomplish the achievement objectives of the school.
- c. A plan must establish objectives for the school to achieve. These achievement objectives must be consistent with [academic standards](#) and include improvement in at least the following areas:



1. Attendance rate.
 2. The percentage of students meeting academic standards under the [Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus \(ISTEP+\) program](#).
 3. For a secondary school, graduation rate.
- d. A plan must specify how and to what extent the school expects to make continuous improvement in all areas of the education system where results are measured by setting benchmarks for progress on an individual school basis.
- e. A plan must note specific areas where improvement is needed immediately.
- f. A plan must consider methods to improve the cultural competency of the school's teachers, administrators, staff, parents and students. The building SIP committee shall:
- (A) identify the racial, ethnic, language minority, cultural, exceptional learning and socioeconomic groups that are included in the school's population
 - (B) incorporate culturally appropriate strategies for increasing educational opportunities and educational performance for each group in the school's plan; and
 - (C) recommend areas in which additional professional development is necessary to increase cultural competency in the school's educational environment
- g. A plan must contain the following components for the school:
1. A list of the statutes and rules that the school wishes to have suspended from operation for the school. [Waivers requested]
 2. A description of the curriculum and information concerning the location of a copy of the curriculum that is available for inspection by members of the public.
 3. A description and name of the assessments that will be used in the school in addition to [Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus \(ISTEP+\)](#) assessments.
 4. A plan to be submitted to the governing body and made available to all interested members of the public in an easily understood format.
 5. A provision to maximize parental participation in the school.
 6. For a secondary school, a provision to do the following:
- h. Offer courses that allow all students to become eligible to receive an Academic Honors Diploma.
- i. Encourage all students to earn an Academic Honors Diploma or complete the [Core 40](#) curriculum.



1. A provision to maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment for students and teachers.
2. A provision for the coordination of [technology](#) initiatives.
3. The professional development program should include the following:
 - j. A narrative that includes:
 1. A summary [analysis of data](#) regarding student learning.
 2. Strategies, programs, and services to address student learning needs.
 3. Activities to implement the strategies, programs, and services.
 4. Evaluation that will be conducted of the impact of the activities.
 - k. An assurance that the program complies with the board's [core principles for professional development](#).
 - l. The professional development program must be signed by the exclusive representative as an indication of support only for the professional development program component of the plan.

(Note) If, for a purpose other than a plan, a school has developed materials that are substantially similar to the requirements stated above, the school may substitute those materials.

(19) Must the plan be limited to these requirements?

No. In order to have a more complete strategic planning process and a written plan that is free from gaps, a school may include, but is not required to include, additional information, including, without limitation, the following:

- a. A narrative description of the school, the community, and the educational programs.
- b. A statement of mission, vision, and beliefs.
- c. Data, including graphs, from the [annual performance report](#).
- d. [Data](#) related to performance indicators other than those included in the annual performance report.
- e. Other information about educational programming and the learning environment.
- f. Information about how the school's curriculum and instructional strategies support the achievement of [Indiana academic standards](#).
- g. Analysis of student achievement based on [Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus \(ISTEP+\)](#) and other assessment strategies.
- h. Proposed interventions based on school improvement goals.

(20) Is there a suggested template that schools can use to prepare their SIP?

Yes. A school may use, but is not required to use, the following sample format for its school improvement plan:



- a. Introduction, including the following:
 - (A) Narrative description of the school, the community, and the educational programs.
 - (B) Description and location of curriculum.
 - (C) Titles and descriptions of assessment instruments to be used in addition to [Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus \(ISTEP+\)](#).
- b. Statement of mission, vision, or beliefs.
- c. Summary of data, derived from an assessment of the current status of educational programming, including the following:
 - 1. Data, including graphs, from the [annual performance report](#).
 - 2. [Data](#) related to performance indicators other than those included in the annual performance report.
 - 3. Other information about educational programming and the learning environment.
- d. Conclusions about the current educational programming, derived from an assessment of the current status of educational programming, including the following:
 - 1. Information about how the school's curriculum supports the achievement of [Indiana academic standards](#).
 - 2. Information about how the school's instructional strategies support the achievement of [Indiana academic standards](#).
 - 3. [Analysis of student achievement](#) based on [ISTEP+](#) and other assessment strategies.
 - 4. Parental participation in the school.
 - 5. [Technology as a learning tool](#).
 - 6. [Professional development](#).
- e. Student achievement objectives, derived from an assessment of the current status of educational programming, including the following:
 - 1. Attendance rate.
 - 2. Percentage of students meeting [academic standards](#) under the [ISTEP+](#) program.
 - 3. For a secondary school, graduation rate.
- f. Specific areas where improvement is needed immediately.
- g. Benchmarks for progress that specify how and to what extent the school expects to make continuous improvement in all areas of the education system.
- h. Academic Honors Diploma and [Core 40](#), including the following:
 - 1. Provisions to offer courses that allow all students to become eligible to earn the Academic Honors Diploma.



2. Provisions to encourage all students to earn an Academic Honors Diploma or complete the [Core 40](#) curriculum.
 - i. Proposed interventions based on [school improvement](#) goals.
 - j. [Professional development](#) that is coordinated with proposed interventions and that supports sustainable school improvement efforts.
 - k. Statutes and rules to be waived.
 - l. Three (3) year time line for implementation, review, and revision.

(21) Can we use the same format required by another accrediting agency to submit our SIP to the DOE?

Yes. You may submit your plan using the format prescribed by:

- a. Locally-Developed Planning Model -- Schools may use the optional format approved by the [State Board of Education](#) or any other format that includes the components required by law. The Department of Education will review the plan to assure that all required components are present. Department approval of plan is not required.
- b. [Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for Education](#) -- The Department of Education will verify participation in Baldrige. Department review of plan is not required.
- c. National and Regional Accreditation Agencies -- The Department of Education will verify accreditation by the agency. Department review of plan is not required.

1. [North Central Association \(NCA\)](#)

- (i) [Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities \(AASDAS\)](#)
- (ii) [American Association of Christian Schools \(AACCS\)](#)
- (iii) [Association of Christian Schools International \(ACSI\)](#)
- (iv) Christian Schools International (CSI)
- (v) [Independent Schools Association of the Central States \(ISACS\)](#)
- (vi) International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA)
- (vii) [National Lutheran Schools Accreditation \(NLSA\)](#)

(22) Are there other planning models sponsored by an entity other than an accreditation agency?

Yes. The Department of Education will verify participation in the sponsor's program. Department review of plan is not required. Planning models that are accepted include:

- a. [Connecting Learning Assures Successful Students \(C.L.A.S.S.\)](#)
- b. Effective Schools Strategic Planning for the 21st Century/[Phi Delta Kappa](#)



- c. [High Schools That Work/Southern Regional Educational Board \(HSTW/SREB/Indiana DOE\)](#)
- d. Indiana Essential Schools/IDOE
- e. [American Student Achievement Institute/American SAI/various Indiana entities \(InSAI\)](#)
- f. Journey to Learning Planning and Performance Program/[Indiana University Center for Research on Learning and Technology](#)
- g. [Koalaty Kid/American Society for Quality \(ASQ\)](#)
- h. PILLARS/[Archdiocese of Indianapolis](#)
- i. Quality Learning/[Langford International](#)
- j. [School Improvement - Focusing on Student Performance/National Study of School Evaluation \(NSSE\)](#)
- k. [The School Portfolio/Education for the Future/Victoria Bernhardt](#)
- l. [Standard-Bearer District-Wide Model/Center for Leadership in School Reform \(CLSR\)](#)